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WATERSHED CONNECTIONS AT DEM

BERKSHIRES REGION

What's My Watershed Address?

We all know the street we live on and the city or town we call home, but did you know you have another address? You share an address with many other people as well as fish, deer, and turtles. That shared "address" is the watershed you live in, and there are a lot of important things you can do to keep that watershed healthy and working right.

What's a watershed? A watershed or River Basin, is an area of land that drains to one river or lake. Within each watershed, all water runs to the lowest point, and all the water in the lower end of each watershed is fed by the upstream areas.

Some small watersheds drain into small ponds or streams; these small watersheds join together to form larger watersheds or river basins. For example, the Connecticut River in Massachusetts has a drainage area of over 11,000 square miles, and is made up of several other large river basins (the Millers, Chicopee, Deerfield, and Westfield Rivers) that themselves are made up of dozens of smaller streams and rivers.

Why does my watershed need protection?

On its way through a watershed, water may travel over city streets, suburban yards, forests and farmland, or it seeps into the soil and travels as ground water. As it moves along, water can pick up sediments, chemicals and other pollutants. Once these pollutants reach a lake or stream, they can kill or hurt animals that live there or their habitats, and can interfere with people's drinking water or recreational activities.

How many watersheds are there?

Massachusetts has 27 major watersheds or river basins, so anywhere you are, you're in a watershed. And because everyone lives in a watershed, you're part of a watershed community. What you do can influence the other residents in the community and natural resources like soil, water, plants and animals.

How do I find out my watershed "address"?

If the map in this brochure shows the city or town where you live, check the name of the watershed shown, and you've got the first step. If your town is not on the map, or you want more information, you can contact one of the groups listed inside. When you go home, you can look in the library to find more details about the rivers and streams where you live.

Who takes care of my watershed?

Because we all live in a watershed, our daily activities, even those occurring miles away from a body of water, can create pollution that ends up in our lakes and rivers. So each of us is responsible for protecting the watershed and its resources.

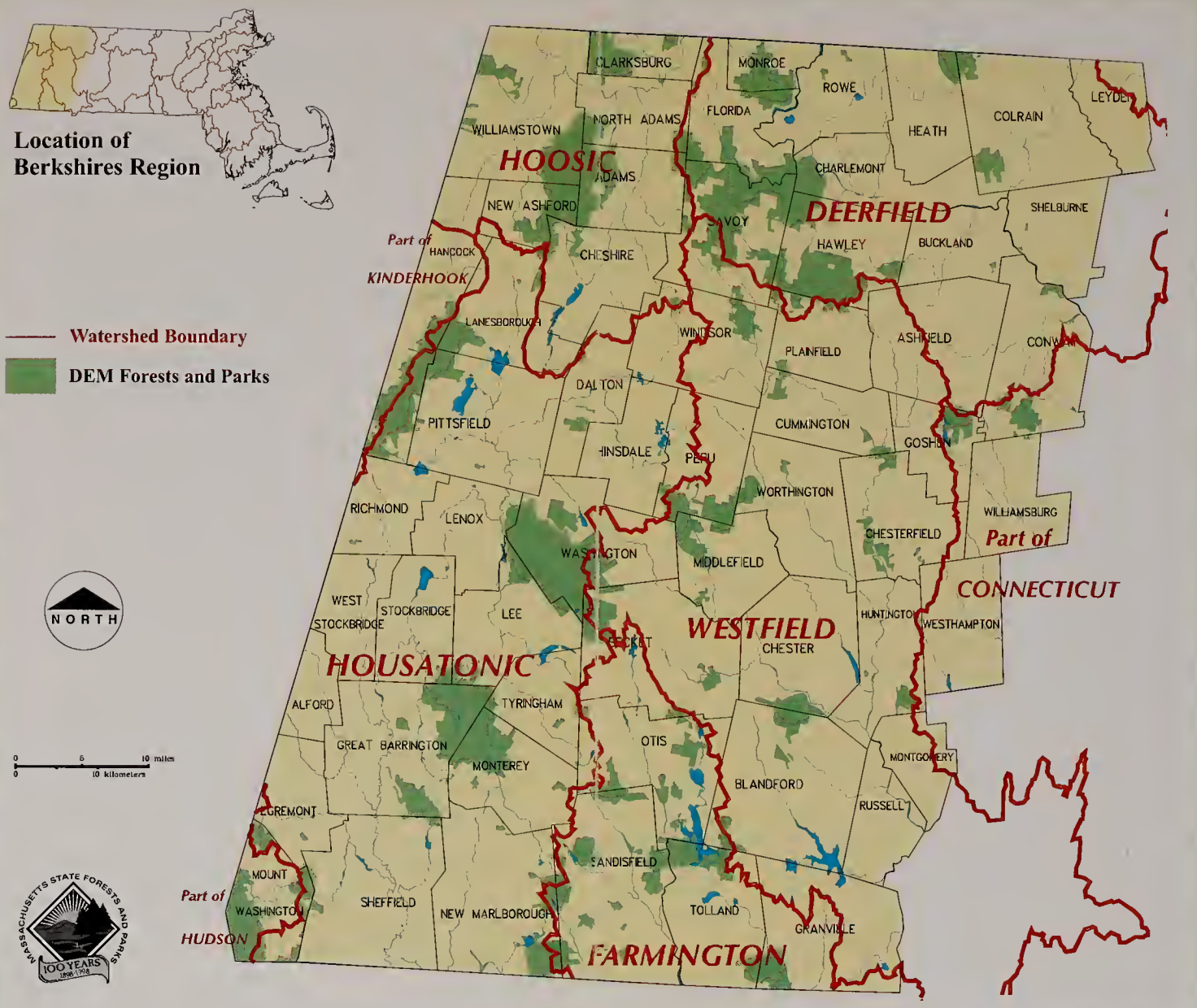
There are watershed associations, made up of dedicated volunteers who help clean up the rivers and prevent pollution. Watershed teams bring together local, state and federal government and nongovernment decision makers to protect the water resources around the state. These groups spend a lot of time and effort to keep our water clean, but the most important person is YOU. Each of us is the key to maintaining healthy, functioning watersheds.

Jon Crispin

Key Tips for Watershed Protection

Here are some easy things each of us can do to protect our watershed:

1. Practice water conservation and solid waste recycling throughout your home and business.
2. Apply lawn and garden chemicals sparingly, and leave a buffer zone of natural vegetation between your lawn or garden and any nearby waterways. Landscape your yard with native plants that need a minimum of water and fertilizer.
3. Work with your neighbors and towns to identify and fix polluted runoff from storm sewers, construction projects and malfunctioning septic systems. And protect wetlands that serve as natural buffers against pollution, soil erosion and flooding.
4. Never pour oil, paints, or solvents down storm drains or into the soil. They will pollute the ground water or a nearby stream and kill or injure fish and wildlife.
5. Learn more about your watershed and the waterways near your home by contacting one of the numbers shown in this brochure. Join or form a watershed community council.
6. Urge local officials (Conservation Commissions, Selectmen, Planning and Open Space boards) to plan for growth proactively.



Map by William Salomaa

DEM'S BERKSHIRES REGION

This map shows the DEM facilities in the Berkshires region and each of the major watersheds in the area. What's the watershed address of this facility?

The Department of Environmental Management is part of a statewide effort to manage, coordinate, and integrate all our activities within the natural boundaries of the Commonwealth's watersheds and to prevent pollution and protect or restore environmental quality by targeting limited resources to where the most environmental benefit can be achieved for our dollars. This **Watershed Initiative** is a strategy for implementing watershed-based resource management in Massachusetts and depends on collaborative, federal, state, and local environmental management.

Where can I get more information?

There are several organizations that can provide information about your watershed and the statewide effort called the **Watershed Initiative.**

Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA)

Coordinates agencies and citizens group activities for watershed education, protection.

- **Director of Watershed Management**
  Provides supervisory leadership for the watershed team leaders.

- **Watershed Team Leaders**
  For the name and phone number of the watershed team leader in your area call the watershed office at EOEA:
  100 Cambridge Street, Boston MA 02202
  Tel 617-727-9800 x 412
  Or Visit EOEA's web site:
  www.magnet.state.ma.us/envir.

Mass. Watershed Coalition

Represents river and watershed protection groups
P.O. Box 577, Leominster, MA 01453
Tel. 978-534-0379
mwc@ma.ultranet.com

Mass. Water Watch Partnership

Volunteer water quality monitoring, training, and assistance.
University of Massachusetts, Blaisdell House
Amherst MA 01003
Tel. 413-545-5532
JSchoen@TEI@UMASS.Edu

File Photo

Photos by Kindra Clineff unless specified

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